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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

FAS FIELD INSTRUCTION NO. 9  
April 24, 1956

DEC 7 1956

SUBJECT: Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955

I. PURPOSE: To inform foreign field employees of pertinent provisions of the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 and the procedures established for the administration of absentee voting.

II. GENERAL: In order to facilitate voting by absentee ballot on the part of Federal Government employees stationed overseas, the 84th Congress passed the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 (Public Law 296). Part of this Act concerns only Federal activities. The rest of the Act concerns the States, and contains recommendations to them to enact uniform legislative provisions.

By Executive Order 10646, November 22, 1955, the President designated the Secretary of Defense as the official to coordinate and facilitate such actions as may be required to discharge Federal responsibilities under the Act.

III. POLICY: An agreement has been reached with the Department of State for the servicing of FAS foreign field employees and their dependents under this Program.

The Voting Officer, designated by the Principal Officer at each Foreign Service post, will:-

- (1) afford each individual affected an opportunity to receive personal advice and assistance in the procedures of absentee voting in accord with the State laws governing the individual's ballot;
- (2) provide employees and their dependents with voting information and balloting material; and
- (3) administer all required oaths in connection with the application for absentee ballot or voting by absentee ballot.

IV. INDIVIDUAL VOTING PROCEDURES: Any individual who desires to vote by absentee ballot in any election should proceed as follows:

- (a) Consult his Voting Officer to be advised of his individual State requirements, and for assistance in filing a ballot application.
- (b) Use the Federal post card application which is available to him to request the desired ballot. This card should be filled in completely and should be legible in all respects.
- (c) Mail the Federal post card application (Air pouch - no postage required) to the appropriate local election official.
- (d) On receipt of the absentee ballot, immediately execute it in accordance with the instructions received therewith. The voter's oath should be attested by the Voting Officer or such other official as may be authorized by the State law governing the individual.
- (e) If the State balloting material is so firmly stuck together when received as to require forcible opening in order to obtain and vote the enclosed ballot, open it in the manner least injurious to the material; after voting, reclose the envelope in the most practical way, by sealing or otherwise; write on the back of any return envelope which shows a forcible opening, the statement, "Envelope flap stuck when received, requiring forced opening before voting"; sign, and request the person administering the voter's oath to sign this statement. In the event State voting instructions include a procedure to be followed by absentee voters in instances of such adhesion of balloting material which differ from the instruction outlined above, the State procedure will be followed.
- (f) Mail the executed ballot (and oath, if on a separate paper) in the return envelope provided therewith, air pouch - no postage required, to the addressee shown on the envelope or named in the instruction.

Distribution List: A (including Agricultural Attaches and U.S. foreign field employees)

(Copy to be sent to the Administrative Officer at each foreign post.)